

Igor Bondar

Once upon a time

in

Heaven

Stories

Igor Bondar

*Once upon a time
in Heaven*

Stories



“Zolotoye sechenie”
2 0 2 3

Another book from the “Once Upon a Time in Heaven” series, consisting of several stories. Using the fantasy genre, the author tries to look at some earthly events not just from the standpoint of the inhabitants of the earth, but from a slightly broader perspective.

“Zolotoye sechenie“ private publisher.

Copyright © Igor Bondar, 2023

ISBN 978-5-6050072-9-6

On the other side of the questions

Early one morning, Doctor Mike Cloud was slowly wandering along a deserted beach. There was nothing special about this walk: he wandered in the same manner every morning, always doing it slowly. This had been going on for three years. This was exactly the amount of time that has passed since Mike resettled in this beautiful deserted place.

Actually, the first time he found himself here was some ten years ago during his regular vacation. During the visit, the place greatly impressed him with its beauty, calmness and some warm silence. So, when Mike decided to quit all his businesses three years ago and live in a quiet and secluded place, the question about the choice of place did not even arise.

He bought a small plot of land on the mountain which provided a splendid view and he ordered a little house from local builders. The size of the house is exactly such that it was cozy but that possible guests passed by due to the absence of free space. After that, Mike built a little swimming pool on the site and bought a second-hand Toyota Land Cruiser all-terrain vehicle of the hundredth series and a small boat on the trailer.

Then, he started to live there. The issue of money was not very important to him because he had managed to earn a substantial sum during his career. In addition, his share in a small company also brought good income every year. Of course, it was not a great amount of money but it was enough for a quiet, secluded life. Although, it may only seem calm to someone outside of this life.

However, the mental work within Mike did not stop during this time; the years of his previous activity left too many questions, questions that were different and very important for him. The questions begged for convincing answers for which he did not find yet, but answers for which he could not stop searching for.

* * *

Angel Gral was also walking on the sand of the beach near his Earthly ward the same morning. He found his beloved Mikey pondering noisily over topics that were important to him – as he usually did. The angel listened to him, skipping some words. He skipped them because all of Mike's thoughts today, like two peas in a pod, resembled his thoughts of yesterday, and his thoughts of yesterday resembled his thoughts of the day before and so on. Nevertheless, Gral listened to him because he did keep the hope that he would someday hear some new important ways of thinking. But so far, it seems that it was only in his dreams.

Although, the main direction of Mike's thoughts was extremely important, the approach to this area itself was

unpromising because the doctor was an atheist and always based his reasoning on scientific or material worldview only. He was a doctor of psychology by training and had worked for a long time in this profession before he moved. All of Mike's knowledge was acquired through the same materialist-psychologists, but only more eminent.

However, Gral was a rare optimist. He strongly believed that the beauty of this place would breach the concrete fence of Mike's worldview, perhaps when he takes his millionth step. Then, the sunlight of true knowledge will finally be able to penetrate through him.

Ultimately, Doctor Cloud reminded Gral of a kind hippo that wanted to hide from everything under his thick skin in order to obtain happiness and calmness, presumably. The angel smiled. Well, there was a chance for him to be calm but, as for happiness, it was absolutely impossible. Gral completely understood that only love, kindness and care for others could bring happiness to a person, and without all these things, the limit of a person's emotionality will only always remain calmness. However, it is quite fragile. The first person who starts to annoy one with his 'stupid' worldview or habits will destroy his calmness, like it was, for example, with Mike's wife Elizabeth.

* * *

At last, Mike arrived at the final stop on the beach where he loved to rest. He had a little folding chair hidden in the sand dune

there. The doctor searched for it but found it in a new location, three meters from the tree under which he had left it. This was not the first time this has happened. Mike could not explain the phenomenon of how his chair was in a new place every time.

He thought of various reasons why this might have happened. The first time it happened, the doctor suspected that perhaps he had a bad memory so he began to mark the place where he had left his chair. He soon realized that it had nothing to do with his memory; indeed, the location of his chair was always different upon subsequent arrivals.

Then, Mike decided that it was some local animals that dragged and dropped his chair for some reason. So, he tied the chair to a tree on his visits. However, he would find the little chair in a new place again. Animals could not have done that.

Mike was now almost sure that it was a prankster or a beautiful she-prankster – oh how he hoped deeply in his heart it was – who shifted his chair. Till now, the doctor has not yet seen his or her footprints on the sand. However, Mike had not been able to come up with any other explanations.

Mike, who had met so many different people during his long period of practicing psychology, tried not to think about this too much. He took his chair, placed it near the edge of the water, and sat comfortably while taking a thermos of aromatic coffee out of his bag. Being quite calm today, the ocean started to roll small waves onto his legs.

He immersed himself into his reflections. Since early childhood, he had been interested in human psychology,

especially the reasons behind humans' various deeds and emotions. He found this area of study very exciting and useful. The doctor had been reading the works of different philosophers and well-known psychologists since he was fifteen. Many of the teachings resonated with his heart, but some he did not find interesting.

Later, when it was time to choose a profession, he applied to the Faculty of Psychology at a university without hesitation. During his study, he extended his knowledge significantly and, at the same time, was acquainted with the main religions and worldviews of people on earth.

At university, he learned a lot of cognitive things. Although in practical terms, he preferred world-renowned psychologists. His attitude towards religion was very skeptical. He once heard a phrase that he liked a lot: 'Faith is always violence against the mind'. Mike adhered this position throughout his life. He explained faith to be laziness and the reluctance to investigate and find the right laws. The doctor also helped his patients strictly within the framework of his acquired knowledge.

However after fifteen years of his work, the system in which he had believed all his life suddenly began to develop errors. Of course, there were some separate 'drop-out' cases before but the doctor considered them only 'exceptions that confirm the rule'. However, this time, everything was more serious. Events that were difficult to explain happened to three authors of best-selling books in the psychological field – the materials that he was largely guided by – almost in a row.

The professor who created a whole system about how to bring children up properly was suddenly given away to a nursing home at old age by his own children. Another famous scientist-psychologist who was studying the issues of strengthening families suddenly divorced his wife with a bang and, as it became known later, the details there were very ugly. One more similar story happened to a well-known psychologist who had given recommendations for obtaining wealth. He went broke completely.

In addition to this all, there was the deterioration between Mike and his wife with whom he had lived for almost twenty years. As a result of all these events, the doctor, who was accustomed to estimate all facts honestly, realized that some elements of the science of psychology to which he had previously firmly believed in seemed imperfect. Following the desire of his soul to sort things out, he decided to withdraw from his work for a while.

* * *

Angel Gral was sitting near Mike, sometimes looking at the sea and sometimes at his ward.

‘Well, my dear,’ the most gentle voice in the world spoke, ‘our Mike still has no progress?’

‘Good afternoon Father,’ the angel rose up from the sand with a smile, ‘well, I am waiting here, but still there is nothing reassuring’.

‘Oh, our little hippo has thick skin’.

‘Yeah, even the shifting of the chair does not make him think in the right direction. He starts to think about a mysterious blonde’.

The angel and Father laughed cheerfully.

‘Well, my dear, it seems that the time has come to help you a little bit,’ Father replied, ‘of course, I prefer it when people understand everything correctly with the help of their heart and head, but sometimes there are kind but very stubborn people like Mike. To help such people is necessary sometimes. Listen, here is what we are going to do...’

* * *

The next day, Mike found his folding chair in a new place again. However, this time, there was a little violet flower stuck in it.

‘Oh, this is something new,’ Mike chuckled and became entrenched in his mental version of the beautiful and mysterious blonde.

After that, he unfolded his chair near the ocean, took his thermos with coffee out, sat down and taking a first sip.

‘I wonder,’ he thought, ‘will I ever meet the one who always shifts my chair? It would be interesting to ask him or her a couple of questions.’

‘Ask,’ he suddenly heard a distinct voice beside him say.

Mike choked and looked around in alarm. There was no one there. The doctor got even more frightened. He knew better than most people what hearing voices meant. To assure himself that he was sane, he got to his feet and walked around the sand dune. There was no one there. Michael returned to his chair, reflecting.

‘May be there wasn’t any voice?’, he finally thought with hope.

‘Yep,’ he heard the same voice again. ‘There wasn’t any voice and there wasn’t a flower in your chair’.

Mike shuddered again and looked around. There still was no one near.

‘What the hell is going on here?’, he muttered aloud in confusion.

‘No, my friend, hell has nothing to do with it,’ the voice was cheerful this time.

It was strange but after such a funny response, Mike suddenly felt calmer. Of course, he understood that he was facing something real and very unusual, but now the fear was fighting with the scientist’s curiosity in him.

‘Who are you?’, he finally decided to ask.

‘I don’t even know what to answer you, my dear,’ Mike heard the cheerful voice speak again, ‘if I tell you that I am your angel, you will not believe me, and if I say something else, I will lie. But I can’t lie. So, maybe you should answer your question yourself, Mikey, huh?.’

‘Angel? What angel?’, the doctor asked incredulously.

‘That is what I said!’, he heard a thoughtful reply.

Mike fell silent for a few minutes, thinking.

‘Can I take a look at you? Well, if you are an angel indeed,’ he finally spoke with interest again.

‘No, Mikey, people can’t see angels on earth.’

‘But they can’t hear them as well,’ Mike reasoned, ‘but I can hear you right now.’

The angel laughed aloud.

‘You are right. But in this case, Father took pity on you because He really wants you to move forward in your reflections.’

‘And this Father can’t take a little more pity and reveal you to me?’, continued the restless doctor.

This time, he heard two laughs of different timbres.

‘Okay,’ the angel said after a while, ‘look underfoot.’

Mike looked down on the sand from which the wave had just gone. The sand was very wet and images as good as in a mirror appeared there. The doctor saw a reflection of himself and a

snow-white creature with wings next to him in this ‘mirror’. Mike was amazed.

‘Wow!’, he finally said in surprise, ‘it is really an angel... and such a beautiful one!.’

‘Thank you. You are not bad either,’ a resonant, merry voice answered in response.

Meanwhile, the sand dried up and the image disappeared. Mike, being very deep in thought, slowly returned to his seat and poured himself a cup of coffee.

‘You know that I do not really believe in all that,’ he said slowly, ‘but I can hear you and even saw you. This is a fact. If all of this is true, angel, why did you decide to communicate with me?’

‘It will not be easy for you to understand why, Mikey.’ He heard a more serious voice. ‘Right now you are living alone, almost hiding from everyone. But you can believe me that you have friends who love you a lot and take care of you. All your life, by the way. And this is a good enough reason for me to talk to you.’

‘Do you love me?’, he asked incredulously, ‘and can I ask for what reason?’

‘You do not have children, Mikey, so it is difficult for you to understand me fully,’ he heard an answer, ‘children are often loved not for something. Well, and you are also honest, kind, purposeful, romantic and dreamy.’

Mike smiled surprisingly.

‘These qualities are important for somebody?’

‘Very important!’, the angel answered, ‘for your Father, me and all the bright angels in the world in whom you do not believe yet.’

‘Oh,’ Mike muttered back, ‘it seems that today, I need something more serious than coffee.’

‘Well, you have something in the top drawer behind the box of chocolate,’ he heard a hint.

‘Do you know where and what lies in my house?’, he asked in surprise.

‘Yep! And I even often help you to remember things. Mike, I am your angel! I know everything. Sometimes even better than you do,’ he heard the cheerful voice again.

‘Really?’, Mike asked in a doubtful tone, then quickly added, ‘then where is my...’

‘In the garage on the third shelf next to the drill’, he heard an instant reply.

‘Hey, wait. I did not even have time to finish what I meant to say,’ Mike said in surprise.

‘Exactly! I can hear your thoughts,’ the angel spoke calmly, ‘that is why it is not necessary for you to even talk out loud to me.’

Mike fell silent in surprise for a while.

‘Listen, angel,’ he said with a hint of doubt, ‘maybe I am losing my mind? Talking to someone, laughing with someone, seeing someone on the sand.’

‘Hmm, it is logical, but frankly it is probably better to lose the mind, such you have, right now.’

Mike laughed for a whole minute at this funny philosophical answer.

‘Yes, I’ve heard a lot about hearing different voices, but I have never heard about cheerful voices with a good sense of humor and philosophical ideas,’ he finally said, catching his breath. ‘Ok, angel. I give up, I believe in you. By the way, do you have a name?’

‘Gral,’ his heavenly friend smiled with relief and joy. ‘However, Mikey, now it is better for us to take a break so that you can think about everything’.

* * *

The next day, Mike was walking to the end of the beach, to the same spot where he liked to sit with a cup of coffee. However today, he was very impatient. Having reached the area, he headed to the sand dune for his chair but soon whistled in surprise. His chair was in the place he had left it the day before – for the first time in a long time. The doctor looked around.

‘Gral, are you here now?’

‘Of course,’ he heard a familiar voice, ‘I am always nearby’.

‘Good morning, angel,’ Mike smiled, ‘why have you not moved my chair today?’

‘Hello, Mikey,’ a cheerful voice reached his ears, ‘why would I do that? I only moved it in order to make you believe that there is something more than just science in this world. Now you believe it and there is no point in changing the location of your chair anymore. I am not a wrecker, Mike, but an angel who helps you understand important things.’

The doctor laughed gaily.

‘Actually, I did not think it was a wrecker. I thought it was a beautiful blonde playing with me.’

‘Yeah, two beautiful blondes. One shifts your chair on the odd-numbered days and another one on the even-numbered days.’

Mike rolled with a laugh.

‘You are funny, Gral!’

‘A little,’ he heard a response.

After a while, Mike placed a chair on the sand, poured himself a coffee and looked at the sea.

‘You know, angel, I am very happy that you emerged in my life. My life is now more cheerful and joyful with you.’

‘I am glad too, but I could have emerged in your life much earlier, if you had believed in God and the angels,’ said Gral philosophically.

Mike took a couple of sips.

‘Listen Gral. Can you answer some questions concerning philosophy?’, the doctor suddenly asked with interest, ‘because I am trying to figure something out’.

‘Of course, I can answer many of your questions,’ the angel said modestly, ‘but the question is, will you accept my answers’.

‘I don’t know yet, I must hear them first,’ the doctor said honestly and continued, ‘so, you surely know why I abandoned all my businesses. Tell me please, why are there so many contradictions in psychology?’

‘It will not be the shortest answer, Mikey.’

‘I have been searching for the answer for three years now so I have time’, Mike smiled.

‘Okay, listen then. There is only one Creator of all the bodies and souls in this world – yours, mine and all the others living on the Earth and beyond – and this Creator is God.’

The doctor smiled so widely that the angel paused his speech.

‘Why are you smiling?’, he asked the doctor in surprise.

‘Oh, I am sorry, Gral. I just caught myself thinking that a couple of days ago, I would have run far away, if I had heard a speech like this one.’

‘You can do it right now.’

‘Er, no!’, the doctor shook his head negatively, ‘now I am really curious to hear everything’.

‘Ok, then let’s continue. So, like any creator only God knows the structure of all his creatures precisely and accurately. That means that He knows the reasons for their illness and recovery and the causes of their happiness and unhappiness. Do you understand this logic?’

‘Well, more or less, I think.’ Mike replied thoughtfully.

‘Then let’s go further. God has never hidden the rules of happiness from His children. Two thousand years ago, He gave them to people through His Son in the form of Commandments. Therefore, those psychologists who in their teaching are closer to the words of the Lord do their businesses more successfully, and with those who step away from them, all sorts of contradictory things start to happen. Instead of healing souls, they often start to nurture false views, selfishness and other things inside of them.’

‘Selfishness?’, Mike asked surprisingly.

‘Of course,’ the angel answered, ‘if a person cannot self-criticize, he will always consider himself right and blame other people. What is that if not selfishness?’

‘I guess I agree with that,’ Mike nodded, ‘and is it possible to understand through some external sign which direction the person goes in his development?’

‘Of course it is. If the person becomes kind, honest, forgiving and able to perceive self-criticism, then his development is going in the right direction. And then, after a time he will come to our world. If he often condemns, deceives, gets irritated, practically does not listen to anyone, then he definitely goes in a different

direction. The outcome of such a movement is usually selfishness, depression and so on'.

'What an interesting approach you have,' Mike said, reflecting, 'and what is depression, in your opinion?'

'Well, a person that is depressed can figuratively be compared to a computer that has picked up viruses. They always 'crash' and barely work. The 'viruses' in our case are bad deeds, condemnation, lies and insults of a person'.

'An interesting comparison. I have never heard that perspective before.'

'You just have never read the words of the Creator of mankind before, Mike. That is why you have never heard of it,' Gral commented.

'What's true is true,' replied the doctor.

'And as for the words of many people-psychologists, who, by the way, sometimes end up living their lives in ways that oppose their teachings – you have read about almost all of them,' Gral said sadly, 'but these are people's words. Erroneous views and controversial results are often behind their teachings. And as for God, He has got thousands of proofs for His truth in the form of different miracles, as each miracle is a dominance of God against Earthly laws, and no one else can do this but only the Creator of this world.'

'Thousands?'

'Well, yes. Dozens of large-scale miracles in Ancient Israel, hundreds connected to Jesus Christ, and thousands more miracles

from His followers, the saints. There were more than three thousand saints.'

'Hmm, that's a lot, and is there information somewhere about this?'

'Of course, it is available to everyone. You have just never even looked in this direction.'

Mike fell silent in surprise for a few minutes. Then he looked up again.

'And can these 'viruses' be somehow removed from this person. For example, you can install an antivirus on your computer. So what is the 'antivirus' for a person?'

'A critical look at oneself and a forgiving one at others,' the angel said briefly.

'Is that all?' the Doctor asked surprisingly.

'That is the most important,' Gral answered, 'but in fact, it is not that easy to do at all. Try to live at least a day this way and you will see that it requires a lot of effort.'

Mike became thoughtful.

'So, do you want to say that if I forgive everyone and be critical of myself, I will be happier?'

'Much happier.'

'Unexpected.' Mike muttered, thinking.

‘And one more thing. You should really forgive people, Mike,’ the angel added, ‘so your attitude towards a person must become kind again, as it was before.’

‘Oh...I was sure that we helped people by giving them a chance to speak out, calming them in various ways and sometimes prescribing pills.’

‘Then the number of depressions would not grow that rapidly, Mike. A soul is an incredibly difficult organ and it can’t be healed with pills. They can only take the heartache away for some time, but it is not the way.’

‘But a calm person is better than a restless one, Gral?’

‘I will try to answer you in a language that is understandable for you. You have a car, Mike. If something is wrong with the engine, for example, the warning lights on the panel immediately light up. To repair the damage, you will need to eliminate the breakdown itself instead of extinguishing the lights on the panel, right?’

‘Right, so what are you getting at?’

‘The discomfort in the soul of a person is also a kind of a warning light from God. This is a warning to a person that he is doing something or thinking wrong in his life. The correct way to really help such a soul, therefore, is through reflections on the causes of unhappiness and search for a solution. The outcome is that such a person discovers the correct medicine from the Creator - the understanding of one’s – not someone else’s – mistakes, and to forgive others, to be honest in everything always. Is it clear?’

‘Quite clear and very figurative,’ the doctor smiled.

‘By the way, I can tell you that there are quite a lot of psychologists in the world who intuitively or practically came to similar conclusions themselves.’

The angel went silent. Mike also stopped talking with him for a long while.

‘Oh, Gral, you have given me serious information to reflect on. It seems that I will have to puzzle over it for a long time,’ he said finally.

‘Puzzle over, my dear. But now, you will be puzzling it in the right direction’.

Mike nodded absently in response and immersed himself deeply in thoughts again.

* * *

The next day, doctor Cloud did not go to the end of the beach as he usually did, and he did not go there the next day too. These days were spent reflecting on what he had heard, as well as surfing the Internet for further information.

Also during this time, he made several calls, one to his wife. Their conversation lasted for almost two hours. Mike did not know what kind of relationship they were going to have now but he felt warmth and comfort in his soul.

Finally, on the third day he got out of his house and went for a walk to the end of the beach. Having reached the place, he immediately spoke.

‘Good morning, angel. I have not been here for a long time.’

However, this time nobody answered him. Mike was surprised and repeated his greeting several seconds later. Again, silence was his answer. The doctor headed for his chair on the dune, reflecting. Having reached it, he suddenly realized that the chair had been moved to a new place again.

Mike did not understand it. He looked around and suddenly saw a clear inscription on the sand of the closest dune’s slope. It read:

‘Everything is right, my dear Mike, but you have to continue on your own. I will always be with you.’

Mike smiled broadly and stepped toward the dune. Suddenly, the sand from the top fell apart and there was nothing left from the text.

‘Okay, my kind angel, I understand everything,’ the doctor said warmly, ‘thank you and your Father a lot for such a big help. I will try really hard not to get lost.’

After that, Mike took his chair and went to the water’s edge. On the way, he stopped and gaily looked at the sky.

‘Angel! If the chair moves along the dune again, can I think that it is the prank of a beautiful blonde?’, he asked with a smile.

Then, he suddenly heard two cheerful laughs in response.

Near the lake

That day seemed not to be the luckiest one in Andrew's life. It all started in the morning when he approached the car and suddenly realized that he had forgotten to bring his keys to it. He had to return home for the keys and only after that, he started the engine of his favorite Toyota Prado.

There was everything he needed in the trunk of the car for his two-day rest near the lake. It contained a tent, an inflatable boat, a small motor for it and a fishing pole. A bag full of delicious sandwiches was also there, of course. Andrew sometimes liked to go to a little-known water area for a weekend. His reliable cross-country vehicle enabled him to approach the shore of almost any river or lake.

The advantage of such a rest was that he could enjoy nature in this case without crowds of tourists around. Andrew had already worked as a sales manager for many years in a large company. So, it was more than enough communication for him with many of dozens of people during the working week.

Fellow googled the coordinates of a new lake which he had recently found and rode into the street. A familiar woman's voice began telling him the route as usual.

Andrew revealed the next trouble after two hundred kilometers since the start of his journey. His smartphone started to politely request for a connection to its charger. Andrew reached into the box where he had a cable and suddenly, after a few seconds, he realized with horror that it was out of its usual place. Considering

the fact that there were about fifty kilometers left to reach the wild lake, this news did not rejoice him greatly.

Andrew stopped by the side of the road and carefully went through the whole car, searching for the cable. It was nowhere to be found. The guy sat down on the trunk lid, reflecting, and poured himself a cup of coffee. The places in this region were quite deserted and there were absolutely no chances of finding a shop with charging cables here. Andrew started to sort through the different options in his head.

The charge of his smartphone was enough for it to work for the next fifteen-twenty minutes. Obviously, it was not enough to reach the place. Suddenly, the guy came up with an interesting idea: copy the plan of this area from the phone to a piece of paper and try to get to the lake with it. He smiled happily at this good thought and quickly drew a map on the sheet.

Then Andrew immediately took the wheel and drove off. He had to try to drive as far as possible by using the guidance of a still working smartphone. Soon he turned into a large unpaved road and after that into another, less noticeable one. After four minutes, Andrew was sadly watching the screen of his faithful friend and helper turn off.

The fellow sighed and stopped the car at the nearest glade. He decided to have a bite and drink a cup of hot tea. The delicious food quickly gave him optimism and Andrew put his handmade map on the passenger seat with confidence. After that, he continued to drive along a narrow forest road.

On his map there was only one turn to the right at the end of which the lake was supposed to be. After a couple of kilometers, Andrew indeed saw a small exit and confidently turned there.

However, that road did not start to turn right as it was shown on the map, but left, and soon ending up in a meadow.

The guy scratched his head in surprise. It was quite obvious that it was not an exit from Google but another one. Soon, Andrew returned to the old road and kept driving along it. Then, he saw another turn to the right. This time, Andrew decided not to turn into it but drive a little bit further ahead. For the next three kilometers. he came across two more turns to the right after that the road ended. Andrew stopped. There was only one turn that was shown on his Google Maps.

‘And which one should I turn to?’ thought Andrew.

Having reflected a little, he decided to turn to the most traveled of these roads. The last exit seemed to be the one. Andrew turned the car around, reached this exit and turned the wheel.

‘Eventually,’ he reflected, ‘since this road is more popular, I have more chance of meeting people here. They should have phones that will show me the right direction’.

* * *

The new side road was not that short. Andrew drove carefully, attentively looking ahead. It was quite obvious that this exit was used, although not very often. After one more turn, Andrew suddenly got to a big green meadow. He stopped.

On the right side of the road there was a beautiful log house behind a small fence. It literally drowned in the vivid greenery that grew around it. There was a small forest lake behind the house. Apparently, it was the lake which he drove to. The guy

sighed with relief and having parked the car near the fence, got out of it. The joyful twitter of birds greeted him affably.

Andrew looked around: there were no other buildings in this place. Obviously, the owners of this house liked solitude. Having stretched his legs a little that felt numb from a long drive, the fellow headed to the gate. He did not find the bell on it, so Andrew decided to draw attention with his voice.

‘Excuse me, owners! Is anyone home?’ he shouted.

He heard a door slam inside and a man appeared on the porch a few seconds later.

‘Yes, there is,’ the stranger said with a smile, went down the stairs and headed to the gate.

The owner of the house turned out to be an elderly man of about sixty years with a big beard and kind look.

‘Excuse me, please,’ Andrew pronounced with a guilty smile, ‘my phone died and it seems that I am a little lost.’

‘It happens,’ the owner of the house commented philosophically and, having opened the gate, stretched out his hand to the guest affably, ‘my name is Nicholas.’

‘Nice to meet you,’ the guy replied to the handshake with a broad smile, ‘and my name is Andrew.’

‘Well, come in the house, Andrew,’ said Nicholas, ‘let’s drink tea or coffee and at the same time, you can tell me how I can help you.’

The fellow nodded in agreement and followed Nicholas along a beautiful path. Then, he went up the stairs and entered the house. He passed the doorway and looked around with interest. It was very bright and cozy inside the house. The room was quite large.

Shelves with books occupied almost an entire far wall. Near, was an armchair and a coffee table with a candle. There was a natural stone stove on the other wall which Andrew had only seen in pictures before. There was a cupboard with table plates behind the stove. A large sofa was placed near the other wall over which some icons were hung. On the fourth and the last wall, two doors were visible. It seemed they led to the other rooms of the house. In the middle of the room near the stove, two chairs and a wooden table were located.

‘Well, come in and get comfortable,’ said Nicholas, ‘I have just made the kettle. Do you want tea or coffee?’

‘Coffee, if possible,’ Andrew smiled.

After some time, they both drank a fragrant drink.

‘So, Andrew, how can I help you?’ the owner of the house asked the fellow.

‘Well, I don’t know,’ Andrew said with a little doubt, ‘do you have a charger for my phone model, by any chance? The rest was somehow resolved - I found the lake and I can definitely leave on my own.’

The guy pulled out the latest model of a popular smartphone from his jeans pocket and showed it to Nicholas. Nicholas smiled embarrassed.

‘I am afraid, young man, I can’t help you much in the matter of electronics. I don’t have a phone.’

‘You don’t have a phone?’ Andrew was sincerely surprised.

‘That happens sometimes,’ an elderly man laughed, ‘I do not even have electricity here. Although, I have a small generator in the shed. I need it for work with some of my tools sometimes.’

‘And what about TV or computer?’ the guy asked again.

‘I don’t have them either,’ Nicolas smiled and explained, having seen the guest’s slightly embarrassed look, ‘No, it’s not about money. I just don’t need it all’.

Andrew fell silent in surprise for several minutes.

‘Isn’t it boring to live in such a way?’ he finally asked Nicholas.

‘Boring?’ the question sincerely surprised the old man. ‘Of course, not. I have dozens of interesting things and activities. Besides, I have a lot of good books, wonderful nature and much more.’

‘Really?’ Andrew looked at the owner with interest. ‘But it would be even more fun with TV, computer and phone.’

‘Well, I don’t think so. All these electronic innovations are only a few dozen years old. And before that, mankind lived happily and did not get bored without them for several thousand of years’, Nicholas smiled and nodded his head toward the bookshelf, ‘Look, all these books were mostly written before electronics emerged in people’s life. And they generally describe these times. Find at least one boring book among them. So maybe it’s not so boring for people to live without electronics.’

The guy was reflecting on what he heard for several minutes, then he stood up and approached the bookshelves. His glance slid along the names and surnames of the authors at the covers: Mark Twain, Dumas, Pushkin, Jules Verne, Conan Doyle. Some of these names he had heard before, some he had not. Andrew thoughtfully turned to Nicholas.

‘So, you mean to say that there are no boring books here at all?’

‘No’, replied the owner of the house, ‘If you want to, you may take and read them yourself.’

Andrew returned to the armchair.

‘Strange, how is it possible to live nowadays without computer and TV?’ he looked at Nicholas with interest. ‘And if you need to choose and buy something, for example? Now, all this can be done in a couple minutes and to know in advance about the usefulness of this or that product. And there was no information like that before.’

‘Nevertheless, people lived then as well and believe me they were just as happy as you are now,’ the elderly man smiled in response, ‘you just mix up the notion of comfort and happiness. Comfort always changes for people, indeed. And as for reasons of happiness and unhappiness, they do not depend on it.’

‘I do not quite understand you,’ Andrew shook his head.

‘Well, for example, two thousand years ago, grandfathers taught their grandchildren to choose donkeys by the shape of their ears. And everyone was very happy when they succeeded,’ Nicholas took a sip of his tea with a smile and continued cheerfully. ‘In a hundred years people will receive all information through some shades of holograms. We, with our contemporary technologies will seem to them like “dinosaurs”. It’s all relative in this world, Andrew. The capabilities of a person always used to change and will always change. However, the reasons for their happiness are unchanged in their essence. They do not depend on the capabilities.’

The guy looked thoughtfully at the owner of the house, trying to comprehend what he had heard.

‘It is difficult for me to understand,’ he mumbled honestly.

‘Don’t worry. You will overcome this after some time,’ Nicholas smiled confidently, ‘there is something real in you. It is not for nothing that you often go out into nature.’

Andrew grinned.

‘Do you think so? To be honest, before this meeting, I thought that I understood everything in this life. However, what you told me surprisingly seems quite logical as well.’

‘Don’t worry, time will sort all things out,’ Nicholas smiled and asked, ‘Do you want some more coffee or tea?’

‘No, thank you,’ the guy answered and, having leaned back in the chair, started to look around.

‘You believe in God, as I can see.’

‘Yes,’ the hospitable owner nodded.

‘And I don’t really believe,’ Andrew shrugged his shoulders.

‘Everyone believes in something,’ Nicholas responded with a smile, ‘and those who don’t believe in God, in fact, have to believe even more.’

‘Oh, really?’ the guy was surprised.

‘Judge for yourself, they have to believe in science, in laws and theories, in predictions, in insurance, in psychology and in thousands of other things. It is easier to believe in God - He is just one.’

The guy laughed out loud because of such an unexpected answer.

‘That’s funny! I have never heard such a version before. But, actually, it is not that boring to live by earthly laws.’

‘Truth can only be understood in comparison,’ Nicholas smiled, ‘life with God is much more interesting. But, you should live this life to feel it.’

The guy looked at the icons and sighed.

‘I am not accustomed to hearing such thoughts in my life,’ Andrew told him honestly, ‘and on the one hand, something inside me agrees with you and on the other something resists.’

‘You will sort this all out after some time,’ Nicholas said to him confidently and added, ‘well, and maybe something else will happen.’

‘We’ll wait and see. Ok, dear Nicholas, it’s time for me to leave. Thank you for coffee and for a really interesting conversation,’ Andrew smiled warmly. ‘However, it is about to get dark and I still need to put up a tent.’

‘You can spend the night in my house if you want. There is a free room in here,’ Nicholas offered hospitably.

‘You have already spent so much time on me, enough to abuse hospitality,’ the guy replied. ‘Besides, I honestly would like to be alone right now to reflect a little bit.’

‘Ok, whatever will be convenient to you,’ the owner replied.

After they said goodbye warmly, Andrew got in his car and continued driving along the shore of the forest lake.

* * *

Before returning home the next day, he stopped by near the gate of the Nicholas house again. Having gotten out of the car, he called the owner out loud to say goodbye to him. However, no

one responded to his call. His new friend must have gone off somewhere on business. Andrew returned to his car with a little regret and continued on his way.

* * *

A year passed. Andrew had recalled the conversation with Nicholas near the forest lake many times during this period. Surprisingly, some simple words of the owner of the cozy house firmly settled in his head for some reason.

Finally, one day, he decided to go to that place again. He waited for the nearest weekend and found the coordinates of that lake on his phone. After that Andrew set off early in the morning.

However, there was a very unusual surprise awaiting Nicolas on this trip. He spent a whole two days searching and driving all the roads of the place, but he did not succeed in finding Nicolas, his house, the big green meadow or even the lake.

Rainbow

Rainbow is a decomposition into components of a main, white color. So, as for love or happiness, for example - is it possible to decompose them 'into colors'?

Those were the thoughts that occupied the head of the future young physicist Enrique Fernandez while standing in line at the butcher's shop.

The guy had come to this resort town located on the seashore several days ago. He decided to celebrate his graduation from the university in such a way. As a result of his studies, Enrique had received his Master's degree in the area of wave physics. He was always interested in this field.

At last, the guy's turn came. A cheerful and well-fed butcher glanced inquiringly at the thin Enrique. He ordered his favorite pork ribs with branded spicy sauce. After that, he headed to the deserted part of the beach in order to slowly eat his snack, relax and take a little swim.

* * *

The next morning, Enrique decided to climb a large rock that was located in the sea not far away from the shore. The rock was really high and the guy had long wanted to post a photo of himself with a breathtaking view on the background on Instagram. Of course, he was scared to climb there. But the glory, according to the guy's convictions, always demanded courage.

Enrique took his smartphone and his telescopic stick for a selfie-photo, put them in a waterproof bag and went into the sea. Five minutes later, he was already getting out of the water on the big stones near that rock. Several local crabs immediately gave way to him. The guy approached a pretty steep wall and looked up. At that second, he became a little sad. But then, he vividly imagined how many likes his photo from the top of this cliff would get on the Internet. Inspired by such thoughts, Enrique began to climb upwards.

Having reached halfway, he looked down and immediately decided not to do it again because from above everything looked even more horrible. The guy tried to choose the most reliable stones on the cliff for moving forward. He once saw in the program about alpinists that people should always rely on three points of the wall and move only the fourth one. Enrique did just that. And the results were not long in coming.

In several minutes, tired Enrique finally crawled up to the top. Having sat on a large stone in the middle of the summit, he looked around. The view from the mountain took his breath away. This rock seemed quite large even from the shore, and as for now, it was really scary to look down from the top. However, the guy, having rested a little, gathered the remains of his courage and took the selfie-stick and his smartphone out of his bag. He combined them together, connected the cord, spread the tripod full length and got prepared for the photoshoot.

Having snapped a couple of photos right on the stone, he looked at the pictures and frowned. His smile in these pictures looked more like a cramp of his facial muscles. The guy took a dozen deep breaths. He always did this when he needed to calm down. He managed to do that and the next photoshoot went more successfully.

After that, Enrique started to choose the best angle for his photos. He wanted the sea and the shore to both be visible in the photo. But most of all, he wanted to show the great height of the rock on which he was now standing. The guy approached the edge and took his hand away to the side as far as he could. He pressed the button on the selfie stick, looked at the photo afterwards and winced. The sea and the shore looked good but the height of the rock was not visible.

The guy took a step to the edge, then again took his hand out with the stick to the side again. The next photo was already more successful. Enrique smiled happily. Such photos on his page on Instagram surely would not be left without attention. The guy wanted to strengthen the effect of height and took one more step toward the precipice.

Enrique did not have enough time to understand what happened. The stone beneath him suddenly whirled and, after a moment, the unlucky photographer was already flying down along the wall of the rock. A second later, his perception of life turned off.

* * *

A few Angels sat on the cloud and looked at the newcomer.

‘Oh well, one more super-photographer?’ one of them asked.

‘Yep, the eighth one this week,’ the other replied.

‘More than last week. So who is he?’

‘I’ll take a look. Hmm...you know, this case is an interesting one. A smart guy, just graduated from a serious university. Future scientist-physicist and the sphere of a vital interest is very high. It is even a little strange that he climbed that rock.’

‘The fashion of ‘glory’ is pervasive now,’ another Angel answered philosophically, ‘let me look at his story as well’.

After that, silence settled on the cloud for a while.

‘Yes, he is not an ordinary selfie-photographer, indeed. Look how many interesting and profound questions he had during the year!’

‘I see,’ the first Angel agreed, ‘it seems that we have to ask the Father’s advice in this case.’

The other Angels nodded in agreement.

* * *

Enrique heard a speech beside him and opened his eyes a little. Two white Angels sat opposite him and chatted among themselves. The guy closed his eyes back quickly.

A stream of different thoughts poured into his head but then, he suddenly remembered the last selfie on the rock. All the thoughts immediately faded away somewhere. All but one.

‘All right Enrique, open your eyes already. We know that you can hear us anyway and we know all your thoughts,’ the guy suddenly heard a calm voice.

He raised his eyelids obediently.

‘Good day,’ Enrique said politely just in case and looked around.

Right in front of him, two snow-white Angels sat on something and looked at him affably. The place where he was right now resembled a beautiful botanic garden.

‘Hi Enrique,’ the Angels said almost synchronously.

The guy looked at them with wide eyes.

‘I understand that I fell from a high rock and died. And now, I am in another world. Is it so?’ he asked.

‘Almost,’ the Angel who was on the right nodded to him with a smile, ‘only you are not in another world but in the present one.

This world is the main one. You came to Earth from here. And all people come back here, too.'

'It is clear,' Enrique shook his head after several seconds and looked at the interlocutors with interest. 'Are you Angels? I just believe in God a little and I have read something about it.'

'This time you hit the nail on the head,' the Angel who was on the left nodded back at him. 'I am your Angel Alos. I have been with you all your life. This Angel is Eton. He is dealing with various accidents on Earth.'

The Angel on the right friendly nodded to the guy.

'Well, you came here because of an imprudent attempt to take your photo on the rock,' Angel Alos continued.

'And, unfortunately guy, you are not the only unlucky photographer on Earth. If only you knew how many people are now injured or even die as a result of chasing such "cool photos", Angel Eton continued. 'This common fashion of selfies brings such results.'

'And is there something wrong with taking selfie?' the guy asked, having noticed a strange intonation.

'No, there is nothing bad with it,' Angel Alos smiled. 'If you do it in moderation, there is nothing wrong with taking some pictures and showing them to your friends or relatives. It is absolutely normal.'

'But not everyone can do it moderately. And when the life of a person comes down to making and showing off one's photos – it is much worse. Actually, not only such selfies but also other options of constant admiration for one's own appearance are bad. All these are already called self-admiration or boasting – they are

varieties of pride,’ Eton added. ‘However, for God and for all of us who live in Paradise, only modesty is valuable, not pride.’

‘Well, and if a person risks his life in order to take an unusual selfie-picture, that means that he is longing for glory. It is a kind of a strong pride,’ Alos continued and smiled. ‘Although in your case, fortunately, it seems more like simple stupidity and following the fashion.’

Enrique comprehended what he had just heard.

‘Yes, it is fashionable now to take selfies in cool places. Many people have such photos, but I still do not have,’ he smiled sadly, ‘and, I guess, I won’t have any.’

‘We’ll see.’ Angel Eton said, looking at him attentively.

‘By the way,’ the guy started speaking with interest, ‘could you please explain to me in more detail the issue of modern fashion on Earth and about tastes. I reflected about that several times and now I have the opportunity to know everything. How does it all look like?’

‘You see, Enrique, of course there is the notion of “taste” in your world and in our world. In both our worlds, in the heart of taste is harmony, but in your world, disharmony also exists. What is the difference between them? For instance, all the flowers in a meadow are very beautiful despite the fact they are all different. It is an example of diversity from God on the territory of beauty and harmony.’

‘Well, and if a person likes something more gloomy. Isn’t it a manifestation of taste and harmony? Is there no such thing in Paradise at all?’

‘So, Enrique, you want to say that someone from Paradise might like, for example, a burned forest or something like that?’

No, my good man, you will not find such tastes in our world,’ Angel Eton smiled.

‘But I know a lot of kind guys who like something dark and scary pictures.’

‘You are right, my dear. People can get used to disharmony. For example, some seemingly ugly fashion after a while on Earth often becomes habitual and even ‘attractive’ for many people,’ Eton smiled, ‘but in fact it still remains ugly.’

‘Or, for example, it is the same with the bad songs in new albums. I know for sure you came across it. After you listen to them dozen of times, they often start to feel more beautiful to people, as well. But again, it is wrong. There are many different examples of such adaptations from other areas. Advertising, for example, uses this tendency in a person a lot,’ Angel Alos added, ‘However, only the first perception of a person through his intuition is the true feeling of harmony from God. And things that people start to ‘like’ after they have watched or listened to a dozen of times is mostly a result of a gradual habituation to some kind of disharmony.’

‘Hmm, interesting,’ Enrique said and suddenly looked around, ‘Angels, can I take a little walk here? I want to see something unusual in your world.’

‘Of course,’ Angel Alos replied with a smile, ‘Let’s go. We will show you something here. Well, meanwhile you can ask us whatever you want.’

* * *

After a while they returned from their walk. The guy walked with burning eyes under the impression from everything he saw. However, the amazing landscapes around him did not prevent him from asking new questions. The last question that he asked the Angels was the role of money on Earth.

‘But there is nothing wrong with having a lot of money or some things?’ he asked.

‘No, of course there is nothing bad in it,’ Alos smiled in response. ‘Here, it is not about what a person has but how he relates to it all. And, it is bad only when people no longer own things but things started to own them.’

‘How is that?’ Enrique looked at his Angel with interest. Alos smiled gaily.

‘Have you ever watched children play in the sandbox?’

‘Well,’ the guy became thoughtful, ‘of course, I’ve seen, but did not watch on purpose. So why are you asking?’

‘Watch one day more attentively,’ said Alos. ‘Pay attention to how seriously children are fiddling around with a simple sand. What they do there is very important to them’.

‘Well, maybe. And what is the conclusion from all these?’

‘Are the things that they do important to you?’ the Angel replied his question with a question.

‘Of course not,’ Enrique shrugged his shoulders. ‘This is just games for children; they’re playing in simple sand.’

‘That’s it,’ the Angel smiled, ‘do you think that for the inhabitants of Heaven, people’s businesses on Earth seem more serious, than the games of children for you?’

The guy was about to say something but, suddenly, he immersed in his own thoughts for a long time.

‘So, you want to say that...,’ he finally said.

‘Exactly. All people’s businesses for us are just as serious as children’s games in a sandbox. All human’s bodies will disappear one day as well as their different plans and activities. Only the quality of human souls will remain. Earth is a kind of enormous sandbox of the Lord. There is a lot of different sand there and many different children. Serious and funny children, kind and not very kind. But only kind children are valuable.’

‘Children...,’ the guy repeated the last word of the angel thoughtfully, ‘such an interesting theory’.

‘Actually, Enrique it is a reality,’ Angel Alos corrected him, ‘The reality which every person will see in a moment of leaving this “Earthly sandbox”. In the way you see it now, for instance.’

Here the guy reflected for a while.

‘I have never thought about it before,’ he finally said.

‘Unfortunately, you are not the only one’, Angel Eton smiled sadly, ‘And if you had reflected on it more, then Earthly goods would not have been able to become too important for you. Well, and if you had reflected on it everyday, then something more would have opened to you. And a beautiful Heavenly tale would have become a reality of your life.’

‘And Earthly reality would have turned out to be an amusing fairytale’, Alos continued. ‘You can keep on playing it as long as you want. But it would never become too serious for you. And it is the only way, friend, how people can lose the sense of importance to different values of the world.’

The guy fell silent for a while again.

‘Angels, and for what does God need this sandbox with people?’

‘With children, my friend. It is the sandbox with His priceless children,’ Angel Alos corrected him, ‘because real values can be born in this sandbox. Real and very, very big ones.’

‘Values? What values?’

‘They all are not external, Enrique. Everything external on Earth disappears sooner or later. Real values can only be internal. They are called kindness, love, faith, forgiveness, honor, desire for the sublime and beautiful, and so on. They all are invisible to an eye on Earth. But after the end of the Earthly life they are the only ones that remain visible.’

‘Do they look beautiful?’ the guy suddenly asked.

‘Very beautiful, Enrique!’ his Angel laughed.

‘Oh, well, and what will happen to those who do not have all these qualities?’

‘They will look very ugly after life, and our world will have nothing to do with them. The Son of the Father told people about that many times when He was on Earth two thousand years ago.’

‘Nothing at all?’

‘Do you like bringing mud and rubbish into your house? Similarly, there is no need for darkness in Paradise.’

‘I see’, Enrique sighed and suddenly looked up with interest, ‘Angels, I often think about what love and joy consist of? Can they be decomposed into the components as, for example, white color is decomposed into the rainbow colors?’

Angels exchanged their glances.

‘It’s an unusual question, Enrique,’ Alos smiled. ‘In general, love is the pinnacle of everything that exists. To make it clear to you, I’ll try to compare it with a boundless, beautiful sea. Of course you can try to decompose this sea into parts and you will get water, salt, fish, corals. But individually they will never be as beautiful as the sea.’

‘Moreover, only the head always ‘decomposes’ something into parts and our heart just always loves. These are not just two different organs, Enrique, these are two different worlds,’ Angel Eton added. ‘Light and rainbow is physic science, and love and happiness is always God. So, just love, fellow, and be glad that you have such great happiness – an ability to love.’

* * *

‘Well, Enrique, the Father decided to return you back to Earth. You are a good man and you can do a lot of useful things in your life,’ suddenly said Angel Eton.

The guy smiled cheerfully.

‘And how are you going to do this?’ he asked after a while.

‘You will see’, Angel Alos smiled, ‘but there is one thing. On Earth, you will forget about us and about our conversation with you. It is customary to act like that in such situations.’

Enrique looked at the Angels with anxiety.

‘How can I forget this? I have learned so much useful and interesting things for myself!’

‘Actually, this information has been described a long time ago in many earthly books, which are many years old,’ Angel Anton

shrugged his shoulders. ‘So, people always can read and look for this information.’

‘But you know, Angels, that now this is not very fashionable on Earth,’ the guy resisted desperately, ‘In addition, there is no one in my vicinity who can give me the correct piece of advice in this area’.

Angels exchanged their glances, while thinking and then, looked upward inquiringly. Enrique also looked up hopefully.

‘Ok, dear, let it be your way. Father agreed. However, we will choose the form of bringing the information to you ourselves.’

‘Thank you!’ The guy smiled happily, then, he looked up and quietly added, ‘thank you...’

‘Well now, let’s say goodbye.’

The Angels stood up with smile and hugged Enrique tightly.

‘Our dear, return back to Earth and try to understand everything carefully. We will look forward to you after the end of your earthly life. And remember that we are always near to you.’

‘Thank you very much for everything!’ the guy responded warmly.

* * *

Enrique instantly came to his senses from falling into cool water. He opened his eyes and started to swim quickly towards the surface.

Having hung his head out over the water after a few seconds, he looked around. The rock from which he had just fallen off was just a couple of meters from him.

‘How lucky I am that I fell right into the water,’ he thought in fright, ‘I could have crushed on these stones! Oh, never will I do these selfies again. It is even very good that my smartphone and selfie-stick have drowned!’

After that, Enrique swam back to the beach. From time to time, he stopped and looked back at the high mountain and shook his head in horror.

* * *

That night, Enrique had a very unusual dream. In this dream, he fell from that high cliff, not into the sea, but on the rocks. And then, he found himself in the another world. There, he had a long conversation with two kind angels.

As the guy woke up, he spent the whole morning thinking about the topic of that unusual conversation. Some strange feeling remained in his heart after that dream. Enrique felt that this late night dialogue did not look like his usual dreams. Besides, all the answers of his late night conversationalists seemed incredibly interesting to him.

Finally, tired of all these thoughts, he decided to switch over a little and turned on his laptop to check the news. However, when he got to his page on social networks, the guy suddenly froze in amazement.

On his page in plain sight there was a picture of him smiling and standing on the top of the cliff from which he had fallen into the sea the day before. And this picture was just wonderful...

Eve

Adam laid in the Garden of Eden, feeling bored. High above him, colourful clouds skimmed and snow-white Angels flew around. Below the Garden, on the Earth, there were various animals, birds and fishes running, swimming and flying. But, Adam was slightly apathetic anyway.

He tore off a grass blade that grew near him and put it in his mouth. At that moment, in the sky above the first human, the caring face of God appeared. His warm eyes looked at His own creation somewhat thoughtfully.

‘Hello, my dear Adam,’ the kindest voice sounded.

The man threw the grass away and quickly rose to his feet.

‘Hello, my God,’ he replied with a smile. ‘I’m glad to see You!’

‘So am I. How are you doing?’ the Creator enquired.

‘Well,’ Adam laughed out, ‘I’ve decided to rest here a little and lie on the grass.’

‘Have you given names to all the earth’s creatures?’ God asked him again.

‘Oh, yes! I’ve already even renamed a couple hundred,’ the human being replied.

‘Perfect!’ God nodded. ‘Do you talk to My Angels sometimes?’

‘Certainly. I talk to them constantly,’ Adam smiled. ‘I chat with them all my free time. They are nice!’

‘Great!’ the Creator smiled in response. ‘Well, do you walk around the Garden of Eden from time to time?’

‘I do this every day. It’s so beautiful there,’ the man replied.

‘Splendid,’ God pronounced slightly thoughtful. ‘You know, Adam, I’ve just been watching you and it seems to me that you are a little bored, aren’t you?’

‘Nothing can be hidden from You, my God,’ Adam bent his head down. ‘I do feel bored a little, speaking frankly. You see, at first, everything seems interesting to me, but then, it gradually becomes more boring. I am really sorry for that.’

‘You don’t say so, my dear, nothing to worry about. As for me, I and the Angels do not feel bored,’ God replied and thought for quite a long time.

‘Alright, my dear Adam’, He finally began speaking, ‘I will try to invent something that you will never be bored of.’

‘Thank You!’ the human being shouted cheerily.

‘Well, it’s nothing at all, nothing,’ God replied him honestly.

The next day, the first woman appeared on the earth – Eve.

* * *

For the following seven thousand years, a lot happened in relations between men and women. There was love and hate, laughter and tears, jealousy and adultery, wrath and reconciliation, revenge and forgiveness, and many, many more.

But never has it been boring for men since...

IQ

Steve Hellenberg was sitting in a cozy chair in his living room thinking. His entire thoughts were only about the note that he had just read. In that note, a very serious scientist from one of the Scandinavian countries had performed quite an interesting analysis with sensational conclusions.

According to his data, IQ scores among young people had been steadily falling in recent years. And that was despite the fact that they had steadily increased almost every year over the past two decades. Of course, Doctor Hellenberg who worked at that time as a teacher at a university could not have worried about this issue.

He thought about it for some time, picked up the note again and carefully read the last two paragraphs – the part with specific statistical figures.

* * *

Marko, a third year student at a marketing institute, planned his day in the morning. First of all, as always, he took his inseparable smartphone to check how much time it would take to get to the institute. The screen showed him '47 minutes' by public transport, specifying the connections, and '32 minutes' by car. Marko did not have a car yet.

After that, the student looked at the class schedule of his girlfriend, Lucia. She finished classes at quarter to three in the afternoon. The young Italian googled "best discounts" from the cafes near his house. That day's best offer was from a Japanese café called "Sushi World". Marko smiled, remembering that his girlfriend had just recently dreamt of having some Japanese cuisine. He chose meals and ordered takeaway for six in the evening. After that, Marko sent Lucia a message. To do that, Marko found a pre-made template on the smartphone that had the most suitable meaning.

As Marko solved this issue, he quickly finished his homework. He printed out an essay he found on the Internet the day before, as well as a short report on the topic "Marketing in the construction industry".

As he finished, the guy put the papers in the bag and went outside. On the way, he stopped by the climate control panel and pressed a couple of buttons. As a result, the temperature in the small rented apartment should soon fall to a cost-effective 15 degrees and rise again to 23 degrees by the time he gets back.

Quite pleased with himself, Marko walked out the door. Once again, his day was well planned from an early morning to the evening. He closed the door, took out his smartphone and sent a message to one of the addresses. After that, the alarm system in the apartment was immediately activated.

* * *

Two snow-white angels were sitting and talking on the shore of a beautiful Paradise Lake.

'Yesterday, my Steve was thinking a lot about the note I planted. Well, about the falling of IQ scores among people' said the Angel named Slaugh.

Another Angel named Olite looked at him with interest.

'Do you think that he'll manage to understand this information correctly?'

'He's a capable guy!' Slaugh nodded optimistically. 'He's understood quite correctly a lot of difficult things in his life before. I really hope he'll also interpret this important note correctly.'

Olite smiled warmly in response and then sighed.

'Yeah, my friend, humanity today is really fascinated by all this modern stuff. And barely anyone seems to be interested in noticing a negative side of that. The note on the falling of IQ scores is one of the very few on this topic.'

'That's true, Ol. People are becoming more and more accustomed to various convenient services and programs, and they think less and less for themselves. They don't understand that thinking is really important. After all, thinking is like a human muscle - if it's not trained, it becomes weaker and weaker.'

'Right,' Angel Olite nodded. 'As a result, a person who thinks and reflects less becomes simpler and simpler. And then he does not need deep books and serious thoughts. Something superficial and short is quite enough.'

'That's right,' Angel Slough smiled. 'It's like parks on earth now. More and more people prefer to ride some electronic rechargeable devices lately, instead of the usual bikes, skates or just jogging. Of course, it's more convenient, but how will one get strong muscles and a healthy body then?'

'Indeed, my friend, one should accept convenience but keep the useful side. Unfortunately, not all of them understand this.'

'That's true. Thinking in general is extremely important for people. After all, a reasonable man stays reasonable as long as he keeps thinking. And, IQ scores are a very serious indicator. They reflect a person's ability to analyze, his ability to see the most important things in life regardless of scenery. If IQ scores are high, then it's easier to find the true meaning of life. What can one reach without thinking?'

'Yeah, not a single computer program has led a person to God yet. It's a fact. And as a result, people live for only seventy-eighty years of mortal life instead of eternity. So smart for "modern civilized times".'

The Angels were silent for a while.

'Perhaps your Doctor or others will figure out something really important in this issue?' Finally, Angel Olite spoke again.

'I hope he will, my friend' Angel Slaugh nodded. 'I really hope so, as always...'

Giuseppe

Seventy-two year old Giuseppe was dying. For his whole life, he thought that it could happen sometime and somewhere to someone else but certainly not to him. But now, death has come for him. Giuseppe knew that for sure. He knew this because of

some inner knowledge, with all his being. Now death whispered calm, quiet and uncompromising words: "That's all."

All Giuseppe's plans and dreams suddenly lost their meaning. The past? He did not even think about it now. He did not want to think about anything at all. He stood at the dawn of some completely new and unknown period, and was completely overwhelmed with this feeling. Of course, he was afraid of what would happen next. But did he have a choice?

A few minutes later, life began to leave his body. This was as real and inevitable as the sun hiding beyond the horizon. Perhaps for the first time in his life, Giuseppe could not do anything to prevent it somehow or at least slow it down. This realm of being was completely beyond his control. As if he was sitting in the car of a sealed shut train, which was leaving the territory called "life" and drove into an unknown tunnel called "death". A second later, Giuseppe died.

* * *

Or rather, he guessed that he died. Simply because he suddenly saw his own still body below. However, Giuseppe's perception of life had not changed - he could somehow feel, hear and see the world around him. Deep down inside, he also felt an incredible lightness and joy - the real joy - which he did not feel in a long time on Earth. Or maybe never before.

After a while, Giuseppe suddenly began to rise above the room where his body was, above the house and then he was flying

inside some bright corridor in an unknown direction. And again, there was nothing he could do about it.

* * *

The end point of his flight did not look like any of the places he had ever been before. Perhaps, it only vaguely resembled a beautiful park, all decorated with joyful lights for a holiday. Everything here was incredibly beautiful and at the same time it radiated a light of all possible colors and shades from the inside. The air was filled with delicate, beautiful scents.

Giuseppe looked up. Little colored clouds were floating in the sparkling turquoise sky.

'Hello, Giuseppe,' he suddenly heard a voice right next to him.

Giuseppe quickly turned around and froze in surprise. Right in front of him was a beautiful white Angel with big wings folded behind his back.

'Hello,' replied the newcomer in an uncertain voice, keeping his eyes on the interlocutor.

He radiated a beautiful light too. However, his eyes seemed a little sad to Giuseppe.

'Well, you've just finished your earthly path,' the Angel said.

'I guess so... I don't really understand anything yet,' replied Giuseppe. 'How do you know me?'

'I'm your Angel and my name is Alaso. Your whole life, I was next to you.'

'My Angel? Amazing! Nice to meet you, Alaso!' Giuseppe smiled broadly.

After that, he began to ask the Angel about many things that were very interesting to him now.

Alaso answered Giuseppe's questions in detail. He told him about the order of the world that was yet unknown to him, about different fates of people after their mortal life.

* * *

'And what will happen to me?' Giuseppe suddenly asked the Angel after a while.

'I don't know,' he honestly shrugged. 'Father will have to decide that. You've certainly done a lot of good things in your life. But, there were also the bad ones.'

'The bad ones?' Giuseppe was genuinely surprised, 'but I tried not to do anything bad in my life.'

The Angel looked at him sadly.

'I have to disappoint you, my dear. You didn't always succeed. Do you want to see the bad things that you've done?'

Giuseppe nodded. At the same moment, he seemed to be connected to some huge information space. Events from his past

life began to float in front of him. They were so bright that he seemed to be living them again. One episode quickly changed to the next, and there were a lot of them.

Here, he was a child stealing a toy from his friend and there, he broke the prohibition of his mom. Here, he deceived his wife and there, he took it out on a poor child. There were plenty of such episodes. Hundreds, if not a thousand.

As Giuseppe watched it, he bowed his head lower and lower. Finally, it was over but for a long time no one said a word.

'Wow, there was a lot,' finally said Giuseppe.

'Yes. And that doesn't account for the bad deeds that you sincerely repented for. Father forgave you for those and didn't show you them,' the Angel nodded.

'Do I have any chance to get to a good place?' Giuseppe asked quietly.

'You do,' the Angel replied.' Father is very kind and you've done quite a few good things. But, let's wait for His final decision. You can be sure that it will be fair.'

Giuseppe sighed.

'Can I do anything now to help myself?' he quietly asked his Angel again.

'Not anymore,' he shook his head. 'You've had seventy-two years for that.'

Giuseppe sighed. His Angel sighed too. Together, they waited for the decision for the newcomer's fate.

Extraterrestrial intelligence

At the department for the study of extraterrestrial intelligence, the work was in full swing since morning. As it usually happened on Mondays, they processed the information received over the past week.

All in all, five cases occurred during this time: two signals of some kind were received from the depths of the galaxy and three unidentified flying objects were seen in different parts of the planet. First of them was seen by an airplane pilot in the Caribbean islands, the second - by a farmer in New Zealand and the third - by a navigator of a sea vessel near the east coast of Africa.

Only the farmer managed to take a blurred picture of a UFO. Other witnesses did not have a camera at hand at the right time. Sound signals, of course, were recorded with special equipment.

All in all, nine scientists worked in that Department. The project has been led by Professor Karl Hortman for eleven years already, and Doctor Silvio Botini has been his deputy and assistant all this time.

That morning, the Doctor and Professor were studying the big blurred picture from the New Zealand farmer on a large screen.

'No, Karl, I still think it's the front of an alien ship' Silvio said and pointed with a pen at the sharpened bright part of the picture. 'Look closely at this place.'

'Perhaps, perhaps' Karl shook his head pensively. 'But to me it still looks like a wing. Remember those pictures from Alaska taken in 2007? There were was something similar.'

'Of course I do' Silvio's eyes lit up. 'At that time, we visited the reindeer-herder who took these pictures.'

'Professor Hortman,' they suddenly heard a pleasant woman's voice nearby.

The scientists paused and looked at the most charming employee of the department standing next to them, Caroline Gloss.

'What's up, Carol?' the Professor said.

'The signals that we've recently recorded' the young woman said, fluttering her eyelashes, 'there's nothing unusual about them. They're the spitting image of those that we get from the Southern Cross.'

'Very nice,' Karl replied. 'Thank you very much and get back to your work.'

After that, they followed her with their eyes to the workplace.

'What were we talking about?' the Professor finally asked again.

'We were arguing what is in this picture - the front part of an alien ship or its wing,' Silvio reminded.

'Exactly' Karl nodded and looked cheerfully at the Doctor. 'But my friend, I'm sure the only thing we'll not argue about is Caroline's design.'

'Never!' Silvio agreed with laughter. 'Well, Prof, let's go get some coffee with a bun for breakfast? And then get back to our work.'

'With pleasure' Karl replied and they moved down the corridor to the institute's cafe.

* * *

Three angels were sitting on a cloud and talking cheerfully.

'Yeah,' Angel Alt shook his head. 'On the one hand, I'd like them to see more of those UFOs, and on the other hand, that's not a good idea. After all, they will exaggerate this topic more than they should.'

'Indeed,' Angel Beth echoed his words. 'It would be better for them to think, believe, hope and search.'

'Right!' Angel San laughed. 'After all, it's like living in a fairy tale for them. And a fairytale is always a good thing! Look at my Caroline - she has watched all the movies from "Star Wars" and "Men in Black" series twenty times or so already!'

The angels burst out laughing.

'And our scientists also watch them quite often' Angel Beth added.

'Nice!' Angel Alt smiled. 'Usually, it's hard to make them think about fairy tales, but with such job they think about it all the time.'

'And the most important thing is, they're growing up kind and honest at the same time, trying to help everyone, trying to find something valuable in the grand Universe,' Angel San added.

All the angels again smiled contentedly.

* * *

The Doctor and Professor ate the first bun in a flash and after a quick thought. ordered another one. Just to improve positive thinking.

'Oh, man, we've been searching for these aliens for so many years. I wish I could take a little peek at them for myself,' Silvio said.

'Tell me about it, buddy. That is my biggest dream. I envy so much all those people who saw them!' the Professor echoed. 'How happy they are to glimpse the secrets of the grand Universe! Although they often don't even realize that...'

'Yeah,' the Doctor nodded. 'It happens all the time. The one who doesn't even need it, meet it at every step, and the one who needs it most of all... What a pity!'

'Come on, cheer up, buddy. We are just a little bit over fifty. I'm sure that the best is yet to come. That's what I've firmly believed for many years,' the Professor said, taking the second bun from the plate.

* * *

Three angels in Heaven looked at each other.

'Oh, I feel so sorry for them sometimes,' said the most sentimental Angel San. 'Maybe we should give them something just once?'

'I was thinking about it too' Angel Alt agreed. 'After all, they've been searching for these UFOs over and over for so many years already. Poor things!'

'Maybe we should ask Father together then?' Angel Beth proposed quietly. 'Well, at least slightly, to reveal to them the secret...'

The three of them looked up half-heartedly.

'Why are you looking at me like that?' they heard the kindest and most cheerful voice from above. 'I also want to pamper them with something. But they'll make such a fuss among the people! And there is enough confusion already...'

'Yes, we understand it, Father' Angel San said on behalf of everyone. 'We're sorry for asking such nonsense.'

'Okay, okay, my good ones. I really like them too. They're so funny! All right, I'll think up something special' the Father said. 'And so that they won't hurt anyone later.'

'Thank you so much, Father!' the three angels shouted in joy.

'Wait a minute. I haven't even started thinking yet' they heard cheerful laughter.

* * *

The following Monday, the Doctor and Professor read through the weekly news again. This time, there were three sound signals and two sightings. Unfortunately, no one took any pictures.

The Professor was about to put the news aside when he caught sight of the screen of a desktop computer. One new email was flashing in the special inbox, which was known only to Silvio.

'Doc, did you send me anything to my private e-mail?' he asked his friend who was sitting nearby.

'No, I only planned it,' Silvio smiled. 'In twenty years or so, I'm going to put you as the main heir in my last will. Well, and then I'll send this document to your private email.'

Both scientists burst out laughing.

'Look, I've just received an email. To my private inbox which no one knows about' the Professor explained and clicked the file on the screen.

For ten minutes, there was only silence in the office.

'Doc, come here' Silvio heard his friend's voice, which sounded strange.

By his intonation he guessed that something extraordinary had happened. Doctor Botini went to the Professor's desk, rolling a chair. As he seated, he looked inquiringly at Karl. His friend nodded at the screen.

'Read.'

'Hello, Professor Hortman' the Doctor began to read the message. 'We know all about you. And we also know that you wanted to meet us for a long time. Today, the higher intelligence of the Galaxy made a positive decision on this matter. Our main condition is: you must keep all the information top secret. The only person you can take with you is your friend, Dr. Silvio Botini. So, our meeting will be in seven days at noon in the following place...'

The Doctor got chills as he was reading the text.

'Is this a joke?' he said quietly when he finished reading the email.

'No' the Professor replied. 'That's what I thought too, at first. But at the end of the email they mentioned several facts from, um... my younger days. No one could have known this. Sorry, mate, but I deleted this part. Nothing special, just some foolish things from my youth...'

At that moment, Silvio noticed that his friend's ears blushed a little.

'Well, things are getting serious!' the Doctor said happily and excitedly.

'Man, I told you that the best was yet to come!' the happy Professor echoed with a broad smile. 'Here it comes.'

* * *

One week later, at ten in the morning, the Doctor and Professor untied a small boat from the pier, which they had rented the day before. In addition to the standard boating set, there was a large suitcase on the back seat. In the suitcase, there were the main findings of their research over the past twelve years. They were carefully compiled by Caroline Gloss. However, she did not even know why her bosses needed all this stuff. Also, there were a couple of phrases by the inhabitants of the Galaxy, which, as they thought, they managed to decipher.

Besides, this suitcase contained formal suits for the meeting. And there was a nice box in a corner with a couple of gifts for the aliens, which demonstrated the high technical and creative level of the inhabitants of Earth. There was a nicely printed periodic table of elements and a CD with a collection of the best songs by the Beatles.

As they came out of the port, they turned right to the channel between the Hamilton and Dent Islands. An hour later, their boat touched the beach sand of a small uninhabited island. The scientists jumped out of the boat and pulled it to the shore.

'Oh, yes' the Professor looked around with blazing eyes. 'What a perfect place for the meeting of humans and aliens!'

'That's true! It couldn't have been a better place' the Doctor said cheerfully. He was so excited about the following meeting with the aliens that he still had chills on his back for the third day already.

After that, they pulled the heavy suitcase out to the shore, put on their suits and waited. It was still a few minutes before noon.

'Do you think they'll come from the sky or from the sea?' the Professor asked.

'Of course, from the sky. After all, they're not sailors, but aliens' the Doctor replied reasonably.

At noon, three snow-white Angels came out of the local forest. Their wings were folded behind their backs. Gently stepping on the sand, they moved towards their wards, who could not keep their eyes off the sky.

'Sorry, you're probably waiting for us,' Angel San spoke up to them cheerfully.

Four intelligent eyes in formal suits stared at the unusual sight.

'Hello, dear aliens' the Professor finally got his voice back first. 'Welcome to our hospitable planet Earth!'

'Hello, dear citizens of the Galaxy!' the Doctor echoed. 'We are more than happy to have this contact with you.'

'Hello, our dear Karl and Silvio!' Angel Alt said with a smile. 'However, we're actually not aliens. We are your heavenly Angels.'

'Perhaps, we'll disappoint you a little' Angel Beth entered into the conversation, 'but aliens, um... do not exist. Well, that's about it...'

'But you have us and we're from the sky, too!' Angel San finished his speech on a happy note.

Four intelligent round eyes stared at the angels, listening to their unusual speech and tried to smile politely.

* * *

After an hour of the angels' explanations, the Doctor and Professor finally began to understand something. And they even had their first reasonable questions.

'So, if there are no aliens, why do you let so many people believe that they exist?' the Professor asked.

'Father gave the freedom of will and choice to all people,' Angel San replied, 'so they can believe anything they want.'

'Two thousand years ago, my dear Karl, the Son of God explained to people who and how exists beyond the Earthly world. And He proved it with hundreds of miracles. This information is freely available and anyone can see it. Has anyone hidden the truth from you? No, you are hiding from it with your own free will, like many others,' Angel Alt smiled. However, you are ready to believe in unproven aliens right away. Moreover, you are even ready to go to frozen Alaska, to look at some kind of blurry photo taken by a reindeer herder. Yes, in this direction you run as fast as you can.'

The scientists finally smiled for the first time.

'That's why aliens are a completely fictional story imagined by people without any serious facts' Angel Beth continued, 'like many other theories on Earth. But people have the opportunity to believe what they want. Father gave them this right.'

'But why did he give us this right?' Doctor Silvio asked with interest.

'Conscious search of a person is important. At the same time, the person's field of work doesn't really matter. Aliens or beekeeping, what's the difference? After a person leaves the earth, he no longer needs neither one nor the other," the Angel began to explain. 'The main thing for the people on Earth is to become kind and honest, everything else is of secondary importance. And all these thoughts about aliens are not that bad, especially for disbelievers. It makes them think there's something more than just the physical world and that's good.'

'Besides, this alien stuff is an infinite source for all sorts of creativity and fantasies. How many wonderful books and movies have been created by people on this topic!' Angel Alt added with a smile.

'I absolutely agree with that' the Professor smiled. 'But I have one more question then. Why can't God bring up good creatures on other planets too? This version is often found in the movies. Then, the aliens would fit perfectly into this picture.'

'You see, Karl, if the Lord needed more intelligent creatures, he wouldn't need to create other civilizations. It would be enough for Him to make the Earth a little bit bigger in size,' Angel San smiled. 'Proper education of people is the most difficult process you can imagine. You haven't read about it, but it implies a seven-thousand-year stage of the constant evolution of human souls on earth - from the time of Adam until our days. Without such moral "school", any civilization doesn't have meaning for its Creator. And without meaning, it just cannot appear in the Universe.'

'Besides, my dear ones,' continued the Angel Alt, 'all good souls look alike after mortal life. Well, like me and my friends.

That's why it makes no sense to create excessive diversity in the Universe in order to end up with a similar one. Do you understand this logic?'

'I think so' the Doctor nodded and smiled. 'That's why all our "evidence" about aliens was so unconvincing?'

'It couldn't be very convincing at all, my dear. Otherwise, this theory would become popular and distract people from the right way,' Angel Beth smiled in response.

'Then, maybe now we have a reason to dissuade people from the existence of aliens?' Karl offered suddenly.

'There's no need to dissuade anyone as well' Angel Beth said. 'Let someone believe in aliens. Let them search for them in the universe, seek for contacts with them. Let them try to make friends with aliens and adopt their high technology. The main thing is to devote yourself to this work. Or to any other work. And to do this, people should really believe in what they're doing.'

The Professor and Doctor looked at each other in deep thought.

'But what should we do now?' the Doctor asked the Angels quietly. 'We don't believe in aliens anymore...'

* * *

Two years later.

'Well, Doc, last time our honey was much tastier, that's for sure' the Professor said after licking the spoon.

'As for me, this one is good too' Silvio shrugged with a doubt. 'But, if you want to, Prof, let's move our hives ten kilometers closer to the mountains. The honey there, is certainly has a different taste.'

'Let's wait a little more, Doc' the Professor replied. 'Caroline should be here soon, she'll bring some food and newspapers.'

'Well, and we'll give her honey for the entire Department, as always' Silvio smiled.

'Of course! She really needs something sweet now.' the Professor said. 'After all, she is the head of the Department now. Rumor has it, she's really good at searching for aliens...'

Both scientists burst out laughing.

'Well, that's fine, Carol's got eight more years. And after that, we'll tell her the truth about these aliens, as we promised Angel San,' the Professor said.

'Oh, we will for sure!' Silvio smiled. 'And maybe we'll show someone... Let's ask our angels about this tomorrow, while playing lotto with them.'

'For sure,' the Professor nodded and stretched himself. 'By the way, Doc, isn't it time to have some coffee with our awesome honey buns?'

CONTENTS:

On the other side of the questions.....	3
The lake.....	23
Rainbow.....	32
Eve.....	46
IQ	48
Giuseppe	51
Extraterrestrial intelligence	56

Igor N. Bondar

Once upon a time in Heaven
Stories

www.dolphinsdivingdreams.com

